

HECTOR DIAZ

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Essays

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Plagiarism: Misfortune or conformity in the art industry?

By Héctor Díaz

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Let us begin with a philosophical reflection: inspiration does not exist; it is the sum and harvest of life experiences, influences, and personal history.

In the artistic field, any artist has influences; it is normal, acceptable, predictable, and even obvious.

Brief context

Centuries ago, painters worked with people present during the execution of their works. Later, with the arrival of the printing press, they also began to rely on images from books. Then came photography, a great resource for creators, whether by taking photos or basing their work on them. Recently, the internet allowed access, literally, to everything.

Artist vs. Painter

The artist creates, has originality, brings something new into the world; their work and career should deservedly transcend, even if misunderstood in their time. They have influences, but these do not dominate their works—they inspire their creation. An artist is distinguished not only by their work but by their discourse.

The painter reproduces, lacks originality, does not bring something new into the world; their work and career undeservedly sometimes manage to position themselves, being understood in their time. They have influences, and it is notorious that these dominate their works; they use them for their creation. A painter is distinguished not only by their copied work but by the lack of discourse.

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Great artists and great painters

There are artists and there are painters. In both cases, one can be very good. However, one does not need to be an artist to be a painter. Creating requires expression. Painting requires technique.

Let's try to understand the difference:

Artists master the art of expression; they work from the inside out.

Painters master the art of technique; they work from the outside in.

What is plagiarism

Plagiarism is:

- Stealing.
- Claiming as one's own what belongs to another.
- Using images without the creator's authorization.

It is the theft of images and ideas from artists by painters. It is the recycling of paintings, photographs, and designs by usurpers from creators.

The Royal Spanish Academy says: «to copy the substantial parts of others' works, giving them as one's own.»

The problem, which is already very serious, is not just stealing what belongs to another, but profiting from it.

It is unacceptable for a painter to steal images and ideas from an artist, claim their works as "their own," and sell them as "art" at exorbitant prices.

The plague

Today there is a real plague of pseudo-artists in the art industry—in other words, painters calling themselves artists.

The question is, why do they do it? Because they are not artists; they reproduce instead of create. Having no talent, but wanting to be called "artists," they become involved in a vicious cycle of theft and recycling in order not to lose the title and the ill-gotten gains, which, by the way, are all penalized by the Law.

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Perhaps the inaction of authorities, the lack of action by galleries and auction houses, as well as the ignorance of collectors (the main affected parties), allows countless cases to prevail and emerge more and more often.

The problems

The main problems are:

1. **Theft.** There is an affected party. Someone is using the work of a creator, and is also profiting from it.
2. **Fraud.** A collector should not acquire a work that lacks authorship, one that is based on another. A work of art has an intangible value; its value is primarily due to the artist; while a reproduction could be priced based on technique and time of creation, provided, of course, that there is an authorization or License.
3. **Usurpation.** It is not penalized to lack creativity, but how shameful it is to claim to be an "artist" when the work is foreign and stolen.

Reflections

Art is one of the noblest professions that exist. Let's celebrate, respect, and admire all artists; but let's also defend them, let's not allow pseudo-artists to copy them. An artist's work is protected by Law, carrying Authorship and Copyright.

Painting without discourse is undoubtedly an artistic expression; it is a beautiful craft. But copied painting will always be plagiarism.

Any collector or person who wants a painting should first ask if the work is the artist's own or if it is based on another; nobody wants to buy copies. Before acquiring a work, insert the image into the Google image search engine; make sure it does not have foreign Authorship.

Works of art have value; reproductions have a price. Let's hope the authorities pay special attention to this cancer in the industry that affects thousands of artists and collectors.

The "artist" creates, the "fraudulent" copies.

Misfortune or conformity?

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How to appreciate a painting

By Héctor Díaz

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Do you like art but sometimes don't understand it? Would you like to be able to understand a painting? HECTOR DIAZ Gallery help you understand the basics of a work of art so you can delve into this fascinating lifestyle.

Visual impact

The first moment you see a work, the first impression it gives you, the first feeling it generates, is known as the "visual impact". Honestly, it is the most unfair way to understand a work of art, because you only see an image; you fail to understand the artist, their context, their technique, their style, and the important part: what the author expressed, the history behind the work.

The artist

The first thing you should know is who the author is. What is their name? What is their artistic name? There are many cases where the artist uses a pseudonym. Example: Pablo Picasso's full name is Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz Picasso.

It is important that you know the date and place of birth; this determines the era in which the artist lived and created. Example: Picasso was born on October 25, 1881, in Malaga, Spain, and died on April 8, 1973, in Mougins, France.

Knowing the region and the era, we can understand the historical context they lived in and how it influenced their career and work. Example: Picasso's work "Guernica" was painted in 1937, alluding to the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War under Franco's dictatorship.

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The technique

The materials used by the creator (oil, acrylic, pencil, charcoal, etc.) are known as technique; the surface they paint on (canvas, linen, paper, wood, etc.) is called support (or ground); sometimes they even paint on a wall, known as a mural. Examples: Oil on Poplar Panel for the “Mona Lisa” by Leonardo da Vinci; Oil on Canvas for “Sunflowers” by Vincent Van Gogh.

Knowing the technique will allow you to understand the method the artist used to create their work, and you will also know which materials they utilized.

The style

Art is grouped by styles, and a hyperrealist work where it looks like we are seeing a photograph is not the same as an abstract one where we see shapes and colors. The easiest styles to identify are: Expressionism, Impressionism, Abstract, Figurative, Pop, Realism, Cubism, Surrealism, Fauvism, Naif, Renaissance, Baroque...

Style is the visual personality of the work and the characteristic signature of the artist. For example: Do you think Fernando Botero has a defining style?

Not all artists stick to a single style; it is common for them to explore throughout their career.

History

The artist expresses "something" in each piece—a personal anecdote, an emblematic moment, a love story, an idea, or an ideal. Try to find out the background behind the work; this will allow you to appreciate it from a different perspective.

Career

An artist's career is valued mainly by the places where they have exhibited their works: Solo or Collective Exhibitions, Museums, Biennials, Art Fairs, Institutions, Auctions, and Galleries. It adds a lot of value to an artist when their work is acquired for private collections for Museums, Institutions, or renowned Collectors. This will allow you to know the exposure of their Brand and work.

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When you see a work of art, do not rely only on the “visual Impact” for your own interpretation; ask, investigate, and understand.

To conclude, keep the following 5 points in mind the next time you appreciate a work:

1. **Artist.** What is their name? Where are they from? What era did they live in?
2. **Technique.** What materials and supports did they use?
3. **Style.** What is the style of the work?
4. **History.** What is the story behind the work?
5. **Career.** Where has it been exhibited? Are there works in museums or private collections?

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